

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 19, 2016

The Honorable Jeff Miller
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building

The Honorable Mark Takano
Acting Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
333 Cannon House Office Building

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Takano,

We write to you today to urge you to move forward in authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) major medical facility leases currently pending before Congress. These lease authorizations are necessary to enable the VA to provide the appropriate level of care and services to veterans in our districts. The 18 facilities listed below all have lease authorizations pending, and veterans in these regions are waiting for improved care through these facilities.

Under current law, the VA must receive specific legislative authorization to lease medical facilities with average annual rental payments in excess of \$1 million. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) currently scores the total obligation for the life of the lease at the time of authorization (in that single fiscal year), rather than annually. This scorekeeping issue has caused these authorizations to receive much larger spending scores, even though the leases are subject to appropriations and do not lead to major spending increases. This approach has hampered efforts to authorize major medical facility leases.

Currently, the following 18 leases in 12 states have leases pending authorization:

1. Ann Arbor, MI – Outpatient Clinic
2. Birmingham, AL – Outpatient Clinic
3. Birmingham, AL – Outpatient Clinic
4. Boston, MA – Research
5. Charleston, SC – Research
6. Daytona Beach, FL – Outpatient Clinic
7. Denver, CO – Chief Business Office Purchased Care
8. Gainesville, FL – Outpatient Clinic
9. Hampton Roads, VA – Outpatient Clinic
10. Mission Bay, CA – Outpatient Clinic
11. Missoula, MT – Outpatient Clinic
12. Northern Colorado, CO – Outpatient Clinic
13. Ocala, FL – Outpatient Clinic
14. Oxnard, CA – Outpatient Clinic
15. Pike County, GA – Outpatient Clinic
16. Portland, ME – Outpatient Clinic
17. Raleigh, NC – Outpatient Clinic
18. Santa Rosa, CA – Outpatient Clinic

We know you share our commitment to America's veterans, and we appreciate your leadership on improving access to healthcare at the VA. These 18 outstanding leases must be authorized by whatever means possible, without delay, to ensure that our veterans are provided the care that our country has promised them.

In the long term, it's important to find a solution to ensure that Congress can act swiftly upon future lease authorizations. The bipartisan Build A Better VA Act would harmonize VA leases with the long-standing approach the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee takes to General Services Administration leases. We encourage the committee to consider holding a hearing on this issue, and debating this or any other proposal Members may have to address this matter. We thank you for your dedication to our nation's veterans and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Bruce Poliquin
Member of Congress



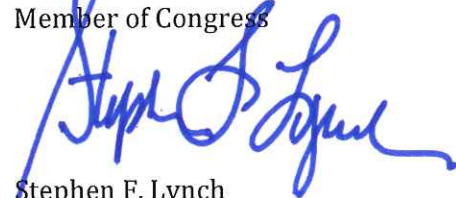
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress